

*“Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted.”* What is the Lord teaching us in this statement? Out of context, the statement itself makes little sense.

We know that in mourning, there is inherent sadness, and happy people do not need to be comforted. And to review, to be blessed reflects approval rather than being ‘happy’ based on ‘what happens’. To know that helps, as “happy are those who are sad” would be difficult at best to understand.

Proper mourning requires a degree of maturity and understanding. A baby cannot truly understand and experience the sorrow of the death of a parent or sibling, but that same baby can cry terribly if you take away his favorite toy.

There are different types of mourning, both healthy and not. Nine different Greek verbs for grief and sorrow reflect this. There are many biblical examples of these.

The Lord Jesus Christ is described as a *“Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief,”* (Isaiah 53:3). Throughout His life and throughout Scripture, there is no attempt to deny or escape the sorrows of life. But to experience God’s comfort, we need to understand the kinds of sorrow that can come to us in life.

There is natural sorrow and mourning. Everyone experiences this. Scripture records types, like the death of a loved one. Abraham *“mourned”* at the death of his wife Sarah (Gen. 23:2). There are tears of discouragement (2Tim 1:3-4), anguish (2Cor 2:4), suffering (Job 16:20), and more.

There is also unnatural sorrow that has the opposite effect on us than what God desires. Whereas godly sorrow heals, unnatural sorrow worsens the wounds. Examples of the causes of this sorrow are selfishness (the loss is upsetting their lifestyle), fear (of change, of the future, of death), or guilt. This kind of sorrow may cause a widow to give an elaborate funeral for a husband she made miserable in life because of guilt.

Lusting after sin is a type of unbiblical mourning. A person can grieve in the sense that they lack the opportunity to pursue a particular sinful lifestyle that they crave.

Another unbiblical kind of mourning is a deceitful show of sorrow to gain attention, pity, or support. The Pharisees in Christ’s day rubbed ashes on their faces to look gaunt from fasting, but Christ exposed their hypocrisy (Matt. 6:16).

This Beatitude is not about natural or unnatural sorrow, it is about supernatural sorrow – the sorrow for our sin that leads to repentance. *“godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death”* (2Corinthians 7:10).

It is imperative to understand the difference between godly repentance, and remorse and regret. A person can know they have sinned and have regret. When their heart is affected by this, they have remorse. But when they respond by turning away from the sin and obeying God, there is repentance. The will is affected as well as the mind and heart.

In Luke 15, the prodigal son illustrates this truth. He knew in his mind that his father’s servants were better off than him. As he was hungry, his heart made him sick about it. If he only recognized his foolishness, he would regret it. If he despised himself for what he had done, he would have remorse. But, when he returned home, confessed his sin and changed his actions, he demonstrated repentance.

We should grieve about our sin. This is not sorrow for the painful consequences of sin or getting caught. God hates sin, and we should hate it too (Amos 5:15). We should have genuine sorrow when we displease God.

Mourning and repenting of our sins is important. But, we should also mourn the fact that we are sinners. *We are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners.* That is our nature apart from the Holy Spirit of God. It is not an excuse for sin, but rather an expression of deeper repentance.

We should also grieve over the effects of sin in this world. Scripture reminds us that all of God’s creation is groaning in pain and awaiting final redemption (Romans 8:22).

We should grieve for the sins of others, for the damage they do to themselves and others. Paul reminded the church at Corinth that they should mourn the blatant sin of one in their midst, rather than boasting of their open mindedness.

*“... for they shall be comforted.”* God’s comfort is far more than sympathy. The English word “comfort” means “with strength” (*fort = strength, i.e. fortress, fortify*). *“If God is for us, who can be against us”* (Romans 8:31). Our *“God of all comfort”* (2Cor. 1:3) is our *“fortress”* (Psalm 18:2).

We need the comfort that only God can provide, and He does so in many ways that we will take up in the next lesson.

## Matthew 5

### The Sermon on the Mount

**5** Seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

### The Beatitudes

**2** And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

**3** “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**4** “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

**5** “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

**6** “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

**7** “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

**8** “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

**9** “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

**10** “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**11** “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you on My account. **12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

### Salt and Light

**13** “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

**14** “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

### Memory Verse for the Week

*“... If God is for us, who can be against us?”  
(Romans 8:31)*